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THE

TRUTH

786

OF THE

Christian Religion,

WITH

The FALSEHOOD of all other
RELIGIONS, Prov'd,

To the Capacity of CHILDREN and
VULGAR PEOPLE.

K

By *THOMAS BURNETT*, 'D. D.



L O N D O N :

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THE HISTORY

OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION

WITH
THE FASSHION OF all other
RELIGIONS, &c.



BY THOMAS BURNEY, D.D.

LONDON:

Printed for A. BARNARD, at the ...
in ...



TO THE
READER.



SINCE the Societies for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge have, and Daily do Encourage the Publishing cheap and little Books, that will not require much Time to read, or Charge to buy, as the best Means to put a Stop to the general Ignorance, which is but too visible among vulgar People : I have thought it not improper to throw this into the common Stock, there being no Subject in which the Ignorant have less Assistance, and yet stand in greater Need of it.

There is nothing that I have yet seen of this kind but what is beyond the Pockets, or the Capacities of mean People ; such Books being commonly too bulky and learned for
A 2 them ;

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them; whereas if we ever hope to do any Good upon low Understandings, the Argument must be plain and short, that they may see the whole Thread of it, as it were at once, and so be able to carry it along with them, and therefore the shorter it can be made, the better.

To answer this Design, I have drawn up this little Piece, in which I have endeavoured to leave Nothing out, that I think necessary for my Purpose: But then, as this is intended only for the younger and more ignorant Readers, so it is not to be expected every thing should be so closely followed as would be necessary; where People are capable of Argument, and the Point is likely to be disputed: for I am not to be suppos'd as treating with an Adversary, but only instructing a Believer how to give a Reason of his Faith. However, in doing this, I have taken Care to build upon a firm Foundation; and have taken Nothing for Granted, but such Principles as the very Heathens agree with us in; namely, That there is a GOD; that He, who made and governs the World, is the True God, and that this God is a Wise, Holy, Good, Merciful, True, Just, Pure, and Perfect Being; and has a Right to our Worship and Service.

These are Principles, I say, the very Heathens allow, and therefore need no Proof. The Unity of God will, indeed, require Proof abroad amongst those who have been taught

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taught to worship many Gods; and in this Case the Missionaries know how to strengthen themselves with such Arguments as are proper for their Conviction. I must confess, I look upon it as one of the hardest Points we have to manage among the poor ignorant Heathens, not only because of their Prejudices against it, but also because the best Arguments we have to build our Faith upon in this Particular, are too Metaphysical for ordinary Apprehensions: Those I here have offer'd in Proof of it are plain and convincing enough; That one God alone ought to be worshipped, and who that One God is: And as I pretend to no more by them, so I think this a sufficient Foundation for Religion: Those who are capable of higher Reasonings, may be dealt with in another Way.

As for the other Points we have an easier Task; but yet as People have seldom clear Notions of the plainest Subjects, unless they have hit upon a right Method of Thinking, so I have here endeavoured, to teach' the Ignorant how to range his Thoughts into proper Order, that he may know what he is first to enquire after, and what Questions he is to inform himself in, and how he is to proceed from one Thing to another without Confusion; so that by this means, the meanest Understanding will, as it were, creep into Knowledge by Degrees, and be able to try the Truth of his Religion, when he sees all Things

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Things laid in Order before him, in a Chain of natural and easy Reasonings.

But as the whole is made up only of general Hints, and Heads of Arguments, which are left to every one's Reason to improve, so 'tis very likely that in many Places the Reader may want to have them further enlarg'd and explain'd: And if so, then he is to have Recourse to larger Treatises, for better Information in those Particulars: And even in this Case, he'll find this Advantage from this Treatise, that his very Difficulties will be brought into Order and Method: He will be taught where to make Objections pertinently, and how to seek out for Satisfaction in them.

These are the Motives that inclin'd me to publish this Little Paper, which I have studied to make Little, that it might be useful; and if it answers this Design, I have my End.





THE
TRUTH
OF THE
Christian Religion, &c.

Of Religion in General.

Quest.



HAT do you mean by Religion?

Answ. The Service of God.

Quest. *How many Gods are there?*

Answ. There are many, which ignorant People call Gods, but there is but one only true God, who is to be worship'd and serv'd by Us.

Quest. *What do you mean by the true God?*

Answ.

Ans. I mean an Eternal Being, that made and governs the World.*

* *The very Heathens agree in this.*

Quest. Why is this Being only, to be worship'd and serv'd by us ?

Ans. For two Reasons ; First, Because he that made, and governs the World, is alone sufficient for all the Ends of our Worship and Service. Secondly, Because he alone can have a Right to them.

Quest. How is he alone sufficient ?

Ans. Because he that made and governs the World must be able to do all Things, and therefore able to do every Thing that is necessary to the Happiness of the World.

Quest. How has He alone a Right to our Worship and Service ?

Ans. Because He having made us, we are His, and as He governs the World, to him only can belong our Prayer and Praise, by whose Providence alone we receive what we want.

Quest. How many Religions are there ?

Ans. Many false, and but one True Religion.

Of True Religion.

Quest. What is true Religion ?

Ans. To serve the True God in a true Way.

Quest.

Quest. *What is the true Way of serving the true God?*

Ans. To serve him according to his own Will.

Quest. *How can you know when you serve him according to his own Will?*

Ans. Either by his Nature, or his Word, which is his revealed Will.

Quest. *What is the Nature of God?*

Ans. He is a wise and holy, just and true, good and merciful Being. *

* This need not be prov'd, because all the World agree in it.

Quest. *How do you know by this, when a Religion is agreeable to his Will?*

Ans. When 'tis suitable to his Nature, both in its Doctrines and Rules.

Quest. *What then must be the Nature of all true Religion?*

Ans. The Doctrines of it must be suitable to the Wisdom and Holiness, the Justice and Truth, the Goodness and Mercy of God, and the Rules of it must teach us to be like God.

N. B. By this we have a certain Standard to try all Religion by, from the Natural and Universal Notions of the Divine Nature.

Quest. *Another Way of knowing when you serve God according to his Will, is by his Word or reveal'd Will; where have you the Word of God, or his Will reveal'd to you?*

B

Ans.

Answ. God has reveal'd his Will to us in that Book which we call the Holy Scriptures.

Quest. *How do you know that the Scripture contains the Will of God?*

Answ. For two Reasons; First, Because the Doctrines of it are suitable to the Nature of God, and its Rules teach us to be like him. Secondly, Because that Book was written by Holy Men sent by God to declare his Will to his People.

Quest. *How do you know they were sent by God?*

Answ. They shew'd it by their Works; some by Prophecy, some by Miracles, and some by both.*

* *This shall be further prov'd in its proper Place.*

Of False Religion.

Quest. *How do you know when any Religion is false?*

Answ. Two Ways, either when we serve a False God, or when we serve the True God in a False Way.

Quest. *How do you know when you serve a false God?*

Answ. Either when we serve any more than One God, or when we serve any other God,

[L I N E]

God, than Him who made and governs the World.

Quest. *How do Men serve the True God in a false Way?*

Ans. When their Religion is contrary to his Nature or his Word, either in its Doctrines or Rules, (*that is, when they are contrary to true Wisdom and Holiness, Justice and Truth, Goodness and Mercy.*)

Of the several Religions that are in the World.

Quest. **H**OW many Religions are there?

Ans. Four; The Heathen, Mahometan, the Jewish, and Christian.

Quest. *Are they all true?*

Ans. No, the Heathen and Mahometan are false.

Quest. *Who are the Heathens?*

Ans. They that serve many Gods; (*that is, many whom they call Gods.*)

Quest. *Why is their Religion false?*

Ans. Because they serve false Gods, (*that is, they serve those for Gods which are no Gods.*)

Quest. *How do you know this?*

Ans. Because there is but One only True God, [*and therefore no other beside him can be God.*]

Of the Mahometan Religion.

Quest. *WHO* are the Mahometans?

Ans. They who serve the True God in the Faith, and according to the Laws of the False Prophet *Mahomet*.

Quest. *Why* do you say this is a false Religion?

Ans. Because, tho' they serve the true God, yet it is in a false Way.

Quest. *How* do you know 'tis a false Way?

Ans. Because many of its Doctrines are contrary to the Nature of God and his Will reveal'd in the Holy Scriptures. [*The Authority of which, in a great measure, they themselves allow.**]

* N. B. The further Proof of this, Children are not Judges of, and therefore it must be left to their riper Understandings: This is sufficient to shew them what they are to inquire after in that Religion, and by what Rules they are to judge of it. See *Prideaux's Life of Mahomet*.

Of the Jewish Religion.

Quest. *WHO* are the Jews?

Ans. They who serve the true God according to the Law of *Moses*.

Quest. *What* is the Jewish Religion?

Ans. A

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Ans. A Covenant between God and the Children of *Israel*, deliver'd by God to *Moses*, and by *Moses* to them.*

* N. B. Here 'twill be proper for Children to be put to read the Account of Jacob's Name being chang'd to *Israel*, and how his Children became a Nation by going into *Egypt* and living by themselves there, 'till God removed them into *Canaan*. Gen. xxxii. 46, &c.

Quest. Why were the Children of *Israel* call'd *Jews*?

Ans. Because they liv'd in the Land of *Judea*, (which had its Name from the Tribe of *Judah*) as we are call'd *English* Men, because we live in *England*.

Quest. Is the *Jewish* Religion true?

Ans. 'Twas a true Religion, that is, it was a right Way of serving God once, but is not so now.

Quest. How do you know it was once so?

Ans. Because they own'd and serv'd no other but the One True God in a True Way, according to his own Will.

Quest. How do you know the Way they serv'd God in, was according to his own Will?

Ans. For two Reasons: First, Because its Doctrines were suitable to the Nature of the True God, and its Rules were intended to make them like God. Secondly, because it was reveal'd and appointed by God himself, in that it was deliver'd by God
to

to *Moses*, and by *Moses* to the Children of *Israel*.

Quest. How do you know it was deliver'd by God to *Moses*?

Ans. By the Miracles which God wrought by *Moses*, and by the Wonders that were seen at his receiving it from God, as also by the Prophecies he spake, by which it appear'd he was sent by God. *

* N. B. Here it may be proper for the Reader to have Recourse to the several Chapters where these Miracles are mentioned, and Children should be made to read them, till they thoroughly understand them, and the Occasion of them, viz. *Exod.* vii, viii, ix, x. Chapters. *Exod.* xiv. ver. 21. *Exod.* xvi. ver. 15. *Exod.* xx. ver. 24. *Numb.* xi. ver. 16. *Numb.* xx. ver. 31, 32. *Numb.* xx. 8, &c.

Quest. Might not *Moses* deceive the People in these Works?

Ans. No, for several Reasons: First, because the Nature of these Miracles was such, that they could not be counterfeited.

2dly, They could not be wrought by the Devil, because they were done in Confirmation of a Holy Religion, which was against the Devil's Interest.

3dly, They had the Testimony of the Magicians themselves, that they were wrought by the Finger of God.

4thly, There were several standing Miracles that went along with this Religion, after

after *Moses* was dead, which confirm what *Moses* had done. *

* N. B. Here 'tis proper Children should be inform'd of the Urim and Thummim in the High-Priest's Breastplate, Exod. xxviii. 30. Of the Waters of Jealousy, Numb. v. 18, 19. Of the Double Increase every Sixth Year, Levit. xxvi.

Quest. Was there any other Proof of this Religion?

Ans. Yes, there was the Confirmation of many Prophets among the *Jews*, who not only wrought Miracles, but foretold many Things, that came to pass.

Quest. How does this prove the Jewish Religion?

Ans. It proves that those Prophets were sent by God, and because that they confirmed that Religion, we must look upon it as confirmed by God.

Quest. Where have you an Account of this Religion?

Ans. In the Books of *Moses*.

Quest. How are you sure these Books give us a true Account?

Ans. Because the Books were written for, and put into the Hands of those very Persons, who knew the Truth of all that was written, and were not only requir'd to read them in Private, but had them read in Publick every Sabbath-day.

Secondly, Because the whole Commonwealth of the *Jews* was establish'd upon this

this Foundation, and many burthensome Laws were imposed upon them, which they never would have submitted to, but upon their Knowledge of the Truth of these Things.

Quest. How do you know these are the Books that were first written?

Ans. They are allow'd to be so by the *Jews* themselves, and have been convey'd down from *Moses*, from Father to Son, to our Time.

Quest. How can you be sure they have not been alter'd?

Ans. As much as I can be sure the Laws of any Kingdom have not been alter'd.

Quest. Why do you say so?

Ans. Because the whole Nation of the *Jews* was govern'd, and their Rights determin'd by these Books in all Cases, as other Nations are govern'd by their own Laws, and therefore, 'twas every one's Interest to keep them from Alteration.

Quest. If these Things be so, why is not this a right Way of serving God now?

Ans. Because it was appointed only for the *Jews*, and that too only for a Time, 'till the Christ or promis'd Saviour should come. *

* See Deut. xviii. 15. Jer. xxxi. 31. Jer. iii. 16. Psal. cx. 4. Isa. xviii. 21. lxv. 17. lxvi. 22. Gen. xlix. 10. Mal. i. 3. iv. 2. Isa. lix. 20. xlix. 8. lxi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 6.

Quest. *Is this Christ or promis'd Saviour already come?*

Ans. Yes, because the Time appointed for his Coming is past, according to the Jews themselves.

Of the Christian Religion.

Quest. *WHO are the Christians?*

Ans. They who serve the true God in the Faith, and according to the Laws of Jesus Christ.

Quest. *What is the Christian Religion?*

Ans. A new Covenant between God and Man thro' Christ, wherein there are several Mercies promis'd by God, upon some Conditions to be perform'd by Us.

Quest. *How do you know this is a True Religion?*

Ans. Because the Christians serve the One only True God, the Maker and Governor of the World, in a True Way, according to his own Will.

Quest. *How do you know they serve him according to his own Will?*

Ans. Because the Doctrines of this Religion are not only suitable to the Nature of God, and its Rules teach us to be like God, but the whole was reveal'd and appointed by God himself.

Quest.

Quest. How does it appear that this whole Religion was reveal'd and appointed by God himself?

Ans. By the Miracles that Jesus Christ wrought in Confirmation of it.

Quest. How do you know these Miracles were wrought by God, and not by the Devil?

Ans. Because they were contrary to the Devil's Nature and Design.

Quest. How were they contrary to the Devil's Nature?

Ans. He is conceived by all to be an Evil Spirit, whose whole Desire is to hurt Mankind; whereas *Christ's* Miracles were in their very Nature good Works, as being Works of Mercy and Charity.

Quest. How were they contrary to the Devil's Design?

Ans. It is the Design of the Devil to draw Men into Sin and Misery, whereas the Design of *Christ's* Miracles was to make us holy and happy.

Quest. Did Christ do nothing but Miracles in Proof of his Religion?

Ans. Yes, he laid down his Life in Confirmation of it.

Quest. But might not he die with a Falsehood in his Mouth?

Ans. No, because he said, before he died, That he would rise again the third Day, as a Sign and Proof of his Authority, and according as he said, he did.

Quest.

Quest. How are you sure he rose again?

Ans. Because he shew'd himself alive to many, to Five hundred Brethren at once: He ate and drank with his Disciples, and conversed with them Forty Days together.

Quest. Did he give any further Proof of his Religion?

Ans. Yes, he ascended up into Heaven in the Presence of his Disciples, by which he shew'd, That God approved what he had done.

Quest. How do you know that he was in Heaven?

Ans. Because he sent down two Angels to testify that he was there, and sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, Acts Chap. i. and ii.

Quest. What do you mean by the Holy Ghost?

Ans. I mean divers Gifts and Powers given by the Operation of the Holy Spirit of God.

Quest. How does the giving these Gifts and Powers prove that Christ was in Heaven?

Ans. Two Ways: First, as it was a fulfilling his Promise to his Apostles, (for he said he would go to Heaven, and would thence send the Holy Ghost the Comforter upon them, and bid them tarry at Jerusalem in Expectation of it.

Secondly, As these Gifts and Powers themselves were an Evident Proof of their being given by God.

Quest. What were these Apostles that had these Gifts?

Ans. Twelve poor ignorant Men, chosen out by Christ to preach his Religion to all Nations.

Quest. Why did Christ make Choice of such mean Persons for this Great Work?

Ans. He did it as a farther Proof of his Religion, that it was not contriv'd and carry'd on by the Wit or Power of Men, but only by the Wisdom and Power of God, working with them in those Gifts.

Quest. What were those Gifts?

Ans. They were of divers Kinds, but chiefly they were the Gift of Knowledge, of Languages, and of Miracles.

Quest. What was the Gift of Knowledge?

Ans. A Power whereby they were enabled immediately to understand every thing necessary to be known, and to teach it to others.

Quest. How does it appear they had this Gift?

Ans. Because they were poor ignorant Men, and yet taught such Things as the learnedst Men never could attain to before, and which they themselves could not have known, had they not been taught by God.

Quest. What was the Gift of Languages?

Ans. A Power, by which they were enabled to speak any unknown Language, as they had Occasion of it in preaching their Religion.

Quest.

Quest. *How does it appear they had this?*

Ans. They gave an Instance of it on the Day of *Pentecost* (*Acts* i. 2.) and 'twas by the Help of this they travelled and converted so many different Nations.

Quest. *What was the Gift of Miracles?*

Ans. A Power of doing any Work that the Wisdom of God saw fit, for the Proof of their being sent by him.

Quest. *How does it appear they had this Gift?*

Ans. We not only read many Instances of it in Scripture, but it would have been impossible, without this, to have converted any body to such a Religion as the *Christian* is.

Quest. *Why do you say so?*

Ans. Because the Apostles had such Difficulties to struggle with, as nothing but the clearest Evidence of the Power of God working with them, could overcome.

Quest. *What were those Difficulties?*

Ans. They were to overcome the strongest Prejudices that Education, Custom, Law, Vice, and Interest could give, beside the utmost Opposition from the Princes and Powers of the World.

Quest. *What was the Reason of this?*

Ans. Because this Religion was not only too Holy for that vicious Age, but also was intended to overturn all other Laws and Rites of Religion in the World.

Quest.

Quest. *Where have you an Account of this Religion?*

Ans. In the New Testament.

Quest. *How do you know these Books give us a true Account?*

Ans. Because they were all wrote either by the Apostles themselves, or such Persons as were with them all along, and therefore were able to give a true Account.

Quest. *But might not these Writers deceive the World?*

Ans. No, they neither would, nor could deceive.

Qu. *Why do you say they would not deceive?*

Ans. Because they could have no Interest in it, but were exposed to the utmost Misery, which they knew would be the Consequence of what they taught, and at last died in Confirmation of it.

Quest. *Why do you say, they could not deceive?*

Ans. Because they not only liv'd in a learned and inquisitive Age, which would out of Curiosity, as well as Interest and Prejudice, examine the Truth of what they said, but they also liv'd in a Time of Peace, when People were at leisure for it.

Quest. *How do you know these Books were written by those whose Names they bear?*

Ans. Because we are inform'd by History, that they were in the Hands of Christians in the Apostles Days, as their Books,
and

and have been preserved by all Christians ever since, as theirs.

Quest. But may they not have been alter'd since that?

Ans. No, because they have been constantly read among Christians in publick and private, as the standing Rule of all Christian Doctrine, and Practice.

Quest. How does this prove they have not been alter'd?

Ans. Because there have been always Heresies and Divisions in the Church, and since all Parties appeal to these Books as their Rule, they have been all concern'd, not only to preserve the Books, but also to keep them from Alteration.

Quest. How do you know this has preserv'd them from Alteration?

Ans. Because we actually find they are the same in all Christian Churches at this Day, without any Material Difference.

Quest. What Use ought we to make of this?

Ans. We ought to conclude, that these Books contain the Will of God, as being wrote by those who were Commission'd by him to reveal his Will to Mankind, and that all Things in these Books are true.

Quest. If so, what will follow from thence?

Ans. That the Christian is the only true Religion, according to the Faith and Laws of which alone we can serve the true God, so as to be accepted by Him.

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